

**DULUTH AMERICAN INDIAN COMMISSION MEETING**  
**Monday, May 21, 2007 - 5:00 p.m.**  
**Room 402 - Fourth Floor, City Hall**

**MEMBERS PRESENT:** Dr. Robert Powless, Donna Ennis, Warner Wirta, Tony LaDeaux, John Day, Ricky Defoe, Mike Sayers, Beatrice Kitto

**EXCUSED ABSENT:** Joy Dorscher, Michele Gordon

**ABSENT:** Brian Wilson

**STAFF PRESENT:** John Judd

**OTHERS PRESENT:** See sign-in sheet

**CALL TO ORDER, APPROVAL OF AGENDA AND INTRODUCTIONS:**

**Motion by Dr. Powless, seconded by Mike Sayers, to approve the agenda. The motion was unanimously approved.**

**REVIEW AND APPROVAL OF MINUTES FROM APRIL 16, 2007 MEETING:**

**Motion by Dr, Powless, seconded by Warner Wirta, to approve the minutes of the April 16, 2007, meeting. The motion was unanimously approved.**

**COMMUNITY PUBLIC FORUM / OPEN PUBLIC COMMENT PERIOD:**

**Courage Duluth** – Eric Larson distributed information about Courage Duluth and introduced himself as a local representative of the Courage Center, which works with people who have been marginalized because of a physical disability. Courage Center helps people with disabilities to discover their recreational/athletic potential. The handout includes contact information. He asked that the Commission spread the word about this resource.

**OLD BUSINESS:**

**Discussion of ISD 709 Physical Planning/Reorganization Proposals and Process** –

Dr. Keith Dixon, Superintendent of ISD 709, thanked the Commission for inviting him to tonight's meeting. He acknowledged the work of members of the DAIC working with the school district. He gave updates on educating the district's leadership team on white privilege; efforts will continue to develop a model for use with teachers and other district staff. The district is looking into representing more of the rich cultures of the world in the social studies curriculum. They are also investigating the possibility of partnering with universities to help sustain Ojibway language in our schools statewide.

On long-range plan: Recommendation will be made to ISD 709 School Board to endorse “Red Plan” outlined in *Details about 3 options for Duluth’s Public Schools*. Question by Dr. Powless: Which plan works best for the greatest number of children? Two high schools with approximately 1500 students each will allow a richer curriculum, enrollment low enough to encourage a sense of community. Socio-economic concerns have been expressed. Open enrollment will be supported.

Discussion followed: Day asked if current education legislation outlook is good for ISD 709. Education funding in Minnesota has decreased drastically over the past few years, and enrollment is declining. DeFoe commented on the recent cuts. LaDeaux asked about the desegregation funding. The funds are being spread out more as other parts of the state see increases in minority populations. Day questioned the extent of the district’s incorporation of the Director of Indian Education position. The office is now located in the district office complex. Kitto brought up the issue of bullying and racism in the schools. Sayers described his family’s experience with the public schools, particularly regarding the negative attention given to minorities and the lack of positive attention. Kitto asked about American Indian education in the curriculum, and Dixon noted that there are some inconsistencies in curriculum that are being addressed. Cultural diversity training is beginning with administrators and will be extended as the training is developed. Dr. Powless stated that members of the DAIC can contribute to these discussions in the schools. LaDeaux is concerned about communication between district administration and Indian district staff members. Sayers and Powless stressed the importance of recruiting Indian teachers. DeFoe mentioned the concerns of low-income people about the loss of Central High School. Dixon pointed out trade-offs of better elementary schools and increased transportation and choice options.

**Report on the Indian Center / Housing Project** – Dr. Powless, explained that he, Zoe LeBeau, and Sherry Sanchez-Tibbetts are pursuing funding for the Housing Project. They met with a possible matching donor in Minneapolis. Another possibility is the Oneida Tribe (WI).

**Review of letter to the Duluth School District, and the Minnesota Chippewa Tribe, to Make American Indian Contributions to the World and a second similar book by Jack Weatherford a required part of the Duluth school district curriculum -**

Deferred until next meeting. Dr. Powless arranged for a 20% discount from Barnes and Noble for Commission members for these two titles. Barnes and Noble will also donate a set to one of the high schools (and the Commission will provide copies for the other two high schools). The title of the Weatherford book is Indian Givers.

#### **NEW BUSINESS:**

**Report on meeting of “ad hoc” Indian center group** – Mike Sayers reported that another group, with no connection to DAIC or AICHO, has been meeting at the Damiano Center and discussing an Indian center project similar to the AICHO project. Mike attended one of their meetings and came away feeling that at this point they are

very disorganized and there is probably no need for DAIC or AICHO to take any action regarding the group.

**Finalize Planning for Community Forum** - Date (August 23/30), Place (Washington Center?), Agenda, Organization, etc. Both dates are open. Day recommended Thursday, August 23. Judd will secure the room. Flyer: Ennis would be willing to do the flyer; she will bring a draft to the June meeting. Publicity: Judd will get it out to the Native news media. Participants: Invite groups and individuals to set up information booths at the Forum. Sayers can get a drum group (Cedar Creek). Guests/speakers: Karen Diver, FDL Band; Principal of the Fond du Lac Elementary School. Food: Sayers will make fry bread. PATH will contribute desserts (bars, cookies, etc.). Judd will see if NYS will let us use their grill again. Suggested time: 5-10 p.m.

**Expiring terms for current DAIC members** - Sayers, Gordon, Wirta, LaDeaux. Sayers is eligible for and open to re-appointment. Gordon is willing to participate as a sub-committee member. LaDeaux, Wirta, and Gordon will continue until replaced. Powless and Dorscher will ask the Mayor that the current members' terms be extended.

#### **ANNOUNCEMENTS, UPCOMING EVENTS AND COMMENTS FROM COMMISSION MEMBERS:**

Judd encouraged Commissioners' attendance at upcoming Blueprint to End Poverty Community Engagement Series. Upcoming meetings: May 22 from 5:30-8:30 at First Lutheran Church and June 13 from 5:30-8:30 at The Depot's Great Hall.

The next Circle of Courage workshop will be on 9/14 at Holiday Inn.

#### **NEXT MEETING/DATE/LOCATION**

June 18, 2007, at 5:00 p.m. in room 402 City Hall

#### **ADJOURNMENT:**